



**USAID | MACEDONIA**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 29, 2010

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## PRESS RELEASE

### **USAID Helps Develop a More Active and Influential Civil Sector**

More than 150 civil society organizations (CSOs) are now more influential in shaping the present and future of Macedonia. Since 2005, the American people, through the USAID Civil Society Strengthening Project (CSSP), have supported efforts to make Macedonia's civil society a more effective and permanent partner alongside government and businesses.

"Citizen participation is the cornerstone of a strong democracy, and no government can afford to be complacent about its commitment to engaging and empowering the public in decision making" said U.S. Ambassador Philip T. Reeker.

The five-year CSSP, now coming to an end, provided grants and other assistance to a select group of CSOs to help them implement their programs and activities more successfully and serve as resources to other organizations. The project promoted reforms in the legal framework concerning civil society, advanced individual and corporate philanthropy, and improved the public image of the sector.

CSSP results include:

- 24 organizations now have skills to lead national initiatives and serve as resources to other civil society groups.
- A significant number of organizations supported by CSSP participated in the process to adopt the Law and the Strategy on Volunteering.
- CSSP grantees successfully implemented over 20 advocacy initiatives at the national level and more than a hundred at the local level. These initiatives addressed such issues as government subsidies, consumer protection and combating domestic violence.
- CSSP grantees raised more than 8 million denars (over \$200,000) from local resources.
- More than 800 volunteers became involved in CSSP grantee projects.
- Representatives of CSOs are more actively involved in publicly raising issues through the media.
- Journalists increasingly use the expertise, research and solutions offered by the civil sector on many critical issues.

The CSSP was a \$7 million project, managed by a consortium led by the Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC), the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL), Konekt and the Macedonian Institute for Media (MIM).

**NOTE TO EDITORS:**

**The American people, through USAID, have invested nearly \$500 million in Macedonia since 1993.** USAID is implementing projects that create jobs, reduce corruption, and prepare Macedonian students for the workforce. These initiatives improve the quality of life and support Macedonia's transition to a stable and prosperous democracy. USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit <http://macedonia.usaid.gov>.